

March 26, 1960

Dear Dr. Bronk:

As Chairman of the National Science Board, I feel I owe you a copy of the enclosed letter to Dr. Waterman, and the more so as we communicate also in other capacities, e.g. the NAS Space Science Board. I hope you will understand my reasons for deferring additional responsibilities, and not ~~be~~ think too harshly of me for this.

In connection with the NSF, may I take advantage of the opportunity to ask whether the Board has organized particular subcommittees, and especially who would have special cognizance of problems of documentation? I am very much disturbed at the situation we are getting into, the indigestibility of the scientific literature, which can frustrate a lot of the creative effort we try to apply. I think the suggestion embodied in the enclosed paper is an especially ingenious one, and ought to be the most fruitful (partial) solution that could be devised for a limited amount of money. It is especially apt as it would require very little skilled manpower. It has been some time since Garfield put this out (if you don't recall his name he is also the publisher of Current Contents), but I gather he has had something less than enthusiastic encouragement from the several government agencies he has discussed this with. The problem is too urgent for a possible solution to be delayed or diverted by procedural technicalities, and I am hoping that some fairly high-level insight and authority might help to cut the Gordian knot. If there is some particular member or subcommittee of the Board who ~~is~~ has particular responsibility for questions of documentation and information I would appreciate your referring me thereto.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

P.S. We have been very gratified to hear that reports of your recent indisposition can be belied.